

## 2. Konark Festival – From stones to milestones

It was a sleepy afternoon in late October 2015 when I got a call from Suprava Ma'am that we have to perform in Konark Festival. Not being fully awake, it took me sometime to register what ma'am had just said. I muttered something incoherent and put the phone down.

And then I just sat still and pondered. Had ma'am just mentioned the "KONARK FESTIVAL"??? Suddenly I woke up from my reverie and rushed to tell my family. So many things had to be done. My daughter Aditi would also participate and things had to be rescheduled, plans had to be adjusted, and permission had to be acquired from the school. Excitedly, I called up my parents in Mumbai and it was decided that they too would travel to Bhubaneswar so that they could watch our show live. Another advantage was that we could practice in the big hall of my parent's home.

With hope in our hearts and doubts in our minds of whether we could meet the expectations of performing on such a renowned stage, we reached Bhubaneswar and started practicing with live musicians for the first time in our lives. The resounding sounds of the mardala and the enthusiasm of the team filled the bungalow with positivity.

A day before the show, we boarded the bus and headed for Konark and when we reached the venue we were spellbound by the stunning decorations and lightings that adorned the whole area. It was simply beyond imagination!

Finally on the same night, we got to practice on the renowned stage. Just standing there I felt I had achieved a milestone in my life! And the next milestone was our performance in front of a discerning audience and live television! And the final milestone was being felicitated by none other than Smt. Priyambada Mohanty ! These milestones will be etched in my mind forever just like the beautiful stones and sculptures of the magnificent Konark temple.

I thank Suprava ma'am for giving this lifetime opportunity to me and my daughter. Never did I think a chance like this would come my way. I did realise we have a long way to go before we can meet the high expectations of the learned critics and audience but somehow I felt God seemed to want us to perform. And we did.

**Smt. Sucharita Tripathy**